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News Release

For Immediate Release: March 20, 2016

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Distressed swimmer rescued from waters off Kauapea Beach

KILAUEA – Rescuers airlifted a Seattle woman from rough surf in waters off Kauapea beach on Saturday afternoon.

Firefighters from the Hanalei station, Rescue 3 aboard Air 1, and lifeguards on jet ski responded to the scene just after noon, when it was reported that a female swimmer needed assistance.

Two firefighters from the Hanalei station swam out to the woman while two lifeguards arrived on jet ski. Officials report that the woman had swallowed a lot of water and was semi-conscious. Due to the difficult conditions, Air 1 arrived on scene with a Billy Pugh net to airlift the woman and one rescuer to shore. The second firefighter was brought to shore by jet ski.

The 33-year-old woman was transported by medics to Wilcox Hospital in serious condition.

Officials warn that Kauapea Beach, also known as Secret Beach, is known for extremely strong currents and dangerous shore breaks, especially during the winter, when surf is strongest along the North Shore.

A High Surf Advisory is in effect for all north and west-facing shores until 6 p.m. Sunday. Beachgoers are encouraged to visit guarded beaches, such as Lydgate, Po'ipū or Salt Pond beaches.

For updated information on ocean advisories, visit the National Weather Service website at www.weather.gov/hawaii.

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